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COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS
OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND SECOND MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 20 November 1993, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. KEBA BIRANE CISSE (Senegal)

- International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): Today the Committee is holding a solemn meeting to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 32/40 B, of 2 December 1977.

It is my pleasure and honour to welcome His Excellency Mr. Samuel Insanally, President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. José Luis Jesus, President of the Security Council, His Excellency Mr. Stanley Kalpagé, Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, and His Excellency Mr. Farouk Kaddoumi, Head of the Political Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), representative of Palestine. I should also like to welcome representatives of Member States, intergovernmental organizations and liberation movements, and representatives of non-governmental organizations, members of the press and all those who have accepted the Committee's invitation to participate in this solemn meeting.

I now invite everyone present to rise and observe a minute of silence in memory of all those who have given their lives for the cause of the Palestinian people.

The participants observed a minute of silence.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I should now like, as Chairman, to make a statement on behalf of the Committee.

We have gathered here today, as we have done annually for the past 15 years, to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. We are greatly honoured by the presence at this solemn meeting of so many distinguished guests. In deciding on the observance of this Day, the General Assembly, back in 1977, was mindful of the responsibility of the United Nations towards the Palestinian people and of the need to spare no effort in promoting a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine. This annual event is an occasion for the international community to reaffirm that commitment.

The commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity has traditionally provided an opportunity for the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, together with States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and United Nations bodies, to rededicate itself to intensify efforts to contribute to achieving a peaceful and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine. It is now universally acknowledged that one of the sine qua non conditions for such a settlement is respect for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination.

This year the International Day of Solidarity takes on a special meaning. It has been a year of remarkable developments in the bilateral negotiating process, which began in Madrid in October 1991. The signing by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements has revived, among the peoples of the region and the international community as a whole, the great hope of a just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and

(The Chairman)

of its core issue - the question of Palestine. Moreover, the multilateral dimension of the peace process, which involves parties outside the region, has recently progressed to address the specifics of the transition period.

The Committee welcomed this significant progress towards the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with the provisions of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and of other relevant United Nations resolutions. The Committee also welcomed the convening of the Conference to support Middle East Peace, and notes with satisfaction the pledges made by donor countries and institutions at the Conference, as well as at the follow-up meeting of its Ad Hoc Liaison Committee.

In its resolution 47/64 A, the General Assembly affirmed once again that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy. The Committee accordingly welcomed and supported the important and timely action taken by the Secretary-General in formulating a unified approach by the various elements of the Organization to the transition process and in sending a technical mission to the region.

The Committee remains convinced that the United Nations must be fully involved in the peace process and in the installation of a Palestinian national authority, as well as in providing the Palestinian people with broad assistance in all areas. It is to be hoped that the progress achieved in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, the initial withdrawal of Israeli forces and the adoption of confidence-building measures will help to ease tension in the region and to promote the atmosphere of mutual trust that is

(The Chairman)

indispensable for the achievement of progress in other areas. We regard these as positive developments.

However, we must not lose sight of the fact that this is only the point of departure in a process that will be long and certainly difficult. The situation in the occupied territory is still very tense and volatile. The re-emergence of violence there is particularly disturbing. This Committee, the primary organ of the General Assembly concerned with the question of Palestine, remains alert to violations of human rights in the occupied territory, which are continuing even while negotiations are proceeding.

Certainly, the Committee has noted a positive change in the attitude of the Israeli leaders in the past year, as well as certain limited measures they have taken, including the release of some Palestinian prisoners. At this crucial moment, however, we wish to emphasize that only effective measures aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territory, including Jerusalem, and implementation of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention can create a climate conducive to real progress.

We are undoubtedly today at a decisive turning point in the sad history of the Palestinian people - perhaps even in the history of the whole Middle East. We are convinced that the time has come for the international community - in other words, the United Nations, Governments and non-governmental organizations - to act.

For its part, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People will spare no effort to make a concrete and positive contribution to the peace process and to the full implementation of the Declaration of Principles. We are committed to continuing to work to ensure the full enjoyment by the Palestinian people of their rights and to promoting a

(The Chairman)

comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Palestine question, based on respect for international law, the United Nations Charter and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

I now have the honour to call on the President of the General Assembly, Ambassador Insanally.

Mr. INSANALLY (President of the General Assembly): I am pleased to join you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Committee in commemorating the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

When the General Assembly decided, 16 years ago, to set aside this Day - the anniversary of the partition of Palestine - it was to demonstrate its concern for and sympathy with the plight of a people long denied their legitimate rights, including their right to a homeland. The designation of this special Day reaffirmed the Assembly's conviction that the attainment of political, economic and social justice by this dispossessed people was essential to a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the conflict in the Middle East.

As we meet on this occasion, we are happy to note the progress that has been made on the question of Palestine. The recent agreement reached between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel, providing for mutual recognition and for Palestinian self-rule in the occupied territories, augurs well for a solution to this long-standing conflict. Both parties are therefore to be commended for this courageous step towards the establishment of peaceful relations between their peoples.

(The President of the General Assembly)

In welcoming this positive development, we urge them to display the necessary political will and good faith to bring their negotiations to full fruition. It would be a pity if a resurgence of violence were to be allowed to jeopardize the process now under way. Another opportunity for reconciliation may not soon present itself. It is imperative therefore that this breakthrough be explored to the full.

At this critical juncture, therefore, the United Nations must be vigilant against any erosion of the Washington agreements. It must be ready to play a role in creating whatever confidence-building measures may be necessary to dissipate the hostility and mistrust which continue to alienate the peoples of the region one from the other. It must also promote, in the larger interest of world peace and stability, earnest negotiations between Israel and its neighbours, leading to reliable security arrangements.

This Committee, under your dedicated leadership, Mr. Chairman, has done much to focus the world's attention on the suffering of the Palestinian people. It must be particularly satisfying for you to see that they are on the verge of realizing their aspirations. Your task, however, is far from finished. As the Palestinians prepare to exercise their right to self-determination, they will require the generous assistance of the international community to set up the machinery for their autonomy. The Committee must therefore work to ensure that these needs are met so that the Palestinians may one day take their proper place in the family of nations. I wish you, therefore, all success in your future endeavours.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I now have the honour to call on His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the Organization.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: The past few months have witnessed historic developments on the question of Palestine. After years of hostilities, Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) exchanged letters of mutual recognition. On 13 September 1993 they signed the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements leading to a permanent settlement, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Talks are currently under way concerning the modalities of the implementation of the Declaration of Principles in Jericho and Gaza.

The Declaration of Principles has, in turn, encouraged the pursuit of negotiations between Israel and Jordan. It is my fervent hope that progress will soon be achieved between Israel and Syria and between Lebanon and Israel in the peace process.

In an effort to support the momentum in the Palestinian-Israeli peace talks I constituted a task force to establish an integrated United Nations approach towards economic and social development in the occupied territories, with particular focus on Gaza, where the need is greatest.

At the request of Chairman Arafat I recently dispatched a technical mission to Tunis and the occupied territories. That mission has initiated discussions on ways in which the United Nations can provide assistance in support of the implementation of the Declaration of Principles.

A United Nations coordinator, resident in the region, will liaise with other institutions, agencies and non-governmental organizations involved in development projects in order to avoid

(The Secretary-General)

duplication of effort and to mobilize international financial support for this process.

The response of the international community in support of the Palestinian people at this challenging time has been most encouraging. Today, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, symbolizes the continuing responsibility of the United Nations towards the Palestinians.

The construction of peace still requires our efforts. But we now live with the hope that the years of struggle, occupation and bitterness are over. We can see the first signs of peace. The suffering is not yet over but its end is in sight. We shall be there to see the new day. The struggle of the people of Palestine will not have been in vain.

The time for war is over. Let everyone now turn to the task of constructing a durable, comprehensive and just peace.

(spoke in Arabic)

The Israeli-Palestinian accord, the direct mutual Palestinian-Israeli recognition, and the meeting held between Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin, all these historic developments, while putting an end to a painful, bloody episode in the history of the Middle East and the Arab world, especially the history of Israeli-Arab relations, have turned a new leaf that has its own difficulties, hardships and challenges. Therefore the overwhelming optimism generated by the accord should not hide from us the difficulties of the present and the challenges of the future.

Despite the fact that this historic accord has put us all on the right and only path to achieving the comprehensive, just and durable settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and especially the question of Palestine, the path is still long and arduous, for the extremist factions are still there on the Israeli and the

(The Secretary-General)

Palestinian sides and despite the differing affiliations and contradictory objectives of such factions, there is the common interest they share in opposing that accord. That alliance between those factions will create numerous difficulties, examples of which we now witness in the occupied territories. Therefore, it is the duty of the international community to support peace unwaveringly and to continue to support those who advocate peace. It is the duty of the international community to support and encourage the efforts of both the Palestinian and the Israeli peoples to achieve and maintain peace, as a first step to be followed by other steps on the road towards the achievement of peace for all the region's peoples.

(The Secretary-General)

It is then that peace would become truly comprehensive, just and lasting, as called for by the United Nations over many a long decade.

Let me end my statement on this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People with a sincere greeting, with renewed appreciation and with expressions of continued solidarity. The greeting goes to the people of Palestine in its armed struggle. The appreciation goes to the people of Palestine for its valour and courage in its struggle for peace. The solidarity is that of the United Nations and the international community as they offer every form of assistance that can promote progress towards the peace after which we aspire.

The Palestinian people, which has asserted itself and affirmed its legitimate rights through armed struggle and violent confrontation, is capable of entrenching those rights in peace, through political and cultural struggle. The challenge of peace is the greatest of all challenges. So let us rise to that challenge.

The CHAIRMAN (intepretation from French): I thank the Secretary-General for his inspiring statement and above all for his efforts to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine and for his support for the Committee's work.

I now have the pleasure of calling on His Excellency Mr. José Luis Jesus of Cape Verde, President of the Security Council.

Mr. JESUS (Cape Verde), President of the Security Council: At the outset, allow me to thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for the kind

(Mr. Jesus, Cape Verde)

invitation extended to me in my capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of November to participate in this special meeting to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to join in this important annual event, in which the international community manifests its solidarity with the Palestinian people and its enduring commitment to the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The annual observance of this Day is not only a symbolic act of solidarity with a people striving for the attainment of its legitimate rights but also a reflection of the importance attached to the need of bringing about the long-awaited solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, which has preoccupied the international community and the Security Council for over 45 years.

There is no doubt that the year 1993 will be remembered as the year of encouraging developments in the Middle East, as well as of bold diplomatic moves of major significance. The welcome progress in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations resulting in the letters of mutual recognition between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization and the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements have ushered in a new era in the history of the Middle East. Much credit should be given to the leaders of the two peoples for their political courage, wisdom and foresight. Together, they have set out on a road to reconciliation and peace, which will benefit the peoples of the entire Middle East region. Our congratulations go to those who have worked tirelessly to facilitate this process.

(Mr. Jesus, Cape Verde)

For many years, the Security Council has been closely associated with the persistent efforts aimed at achieving a just and lasting settlement of the complex issues involved in the Middle East conflict. As President of the Council, I am particularly gratified that the recent landmark agreement was reached in the course of negotiations based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

I would like to emphasize that the members of the Council are fully aware of the difficulties involved in the transitional process and call upon the parties to proceed in the same spirit of flexibility and mutual understanding, in the interest of peace. We note with appreciation the international community's overwhelming support for the agreements reached and its readiness to make a constructive contribution to their successful implementation. The Council is gratified by the early commitments for assistance made by various donor countries and organizations, including the United Nations, and stresses the importance of effective and coordinated involvement in this endeavour by all concerned.

Guided by its responsibilities under the Charter, the Security Council will continue to be committed to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the entire region of the Middle East for the benefit of all parties concerned, including the Palestinian people. Today, this is particularly vital, as much has yet to be done to achieve that goal.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I now have the honour of calling on His Excellency Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer of Palestine, who will read out a message from His Excellency Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Mr. AL-KIDWA (Palestine) (interpretation from Arabic): I have the honour, on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, to read out a message from His Excellency Mr. Yasser Arafat, President of Palestine and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The text of the message is as follows:

"On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, 29 November, I should like, in the name of our Palestinian people, my brother members of the Executive Committee of the PLO, and the new Palestinian National Authority, and on my own behalf, to convey to the Committee our cordial greetings and best wishes. I also extend my deepest thanks to His Excellency Mr. Keba Birane Cisse, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, for the important and wide-ranging efforts he has been deploying and continues to deploy to reaffirm the rights of our Palestinian people and to promote them on all levels and in all fields.

"I also extend my deepest thanks to my brother, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his meticulous follow-up and sponsorship of the work of the Committee. The valuable efforts he is undertaking will strengthen the role of the United Nations in solving international crises and especially that of the Middle East, with its core issue, the cause of Palestine.

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

"I should like to commend also the major and important role that has been performed, and continues to be performed, by the United Nations, its institutions, its specialized agencies and its Division for Palestinian Rights in maintaining, strengthening, emphasizing and protecting the rights of the Palestinian people and in providing assistance to our people in order to mitigate their suffering under their tragic living conditions. In all this, your Committee has played a very important and significant role.

"Therefore, I should like also to convey my deepest thanks to Their Excellencies the Ambassadors of the fraternal and friendly countries that are members of your Committee and to their Governments and peoples for the positions of support and solidarity they have taken and continue to take on the side of the Palestinian people's just struggle for regaining and exercising their national inalienable rights, including their right of return, their right to self-determination and to the establishment of their own independent State with Holy Al-Quds as its capital.

"The meeting of your esteemed Committee takes place under important circumstances and at a time of major change in our region, the Middle East. This puts the region at a strategic crossroads: either to move forward on the track of democracy, development and prosperity, and to play, thereby a positive role in shaping a promising future for its peoples that would contribute to strengthening peace and stability in the region and in the world, or to be pushed back into the cycles of chaos, war, calamities and Balkanization, with all the attendant dangers that allow the forces of darkness and

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

retrogression to take the upper hand, with all that that would mean for the peace and security of the whole world.

"This describes realistically the situation that has existed since the signing of the agreement set out in the Declaration of Principles and the mutual recognition between the PLO and the Government of Israel. The agreement does in fact represent a major turning-point in the history of the Palestinian cause and the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is also a basic step necessary for our joint efforts to arrive at a just, permanent and comprehensive peace in the Middle East region on the basis of the implementation of resolutions under international law, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). It is necessary to achieve tangible progress on all other tracks, so as to achieve the Israeli withdrawal from the Arab and Palestinian occupied territories, including Holy Al-Quds.

"The agreement contained in the Declaration of Principles which we signed in Washington on 13 September 1993 stipulates complete withdrawal by the Israeli occupying forces from the Gaza strip and the Jericho area, where the Palestine national authority will be established, and, at the same time, the rest of the West Bank will be subject to the agreement on the interim period, during which time the issues involved in that agreement, along with those of Arab Al-Quds, the refugees and the final status of the settlements, will be discussed, not later than the third year, in order to establish their final status.

"The agreement stipulates also that free legislative elections shall be conducted to elect the Palestinian Council,

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which will have wide-ranging legislative powers that cover all the occupied Palestinian territories, including Holy Al-Quds.

"At the same time, we are working on establishing the structures and institutions necessary for translating this agreement into reality on the ground. Our Palestinian Central Council has ratified this agreement; it has formed the Palestine national authority and has chosen me to be its President. We have formed the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction to plan and formulate economic policy in the Palestinian territories and to specify, plan and carry out projects. We are also establishing the Palestinian Security Force, which will be one of the underpinnings of peace, security and stability in the region.

"However, the success of the agreement will depend, in the first place, on the intention and desire of both parties to implement its articles faithfully, in a spirit of understanding and co-equality, and to resolve existing and new differences and surmount obstacles through peaceful dialogue and arbitration. Success will depend also on the will of the international community, which is a witness to the agreement, to provide all necessary support. This will require great and sincere efforts on the part of all our brethren and friends, and of all those who are for just peace the world over.

"You are no doubt aware that we need to rebuild our Palestinian national structures and institutions, and the infrastructures of our national economy, because the Israeli military authorities and the Israeli civil administration have destroyed most of those institutions and infrastructures.

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

This places on our shoulders great financial, material and moral responsibilities, and we will need the support of the international community for our people on all levels in the form of all kinds of political, economic, material and moral assistance.

"While we extend our thanks to the donor countries, which have pledged $2.2 billion over a period of five years as their contribution to this difficult process, we must assure you that the programmes that we have put together with the help of the World Bank and friendly powers require much greater amounts than have already been pledged; the amount will exceed $12 billion up to the end of the century. We, therefore, think that implementing the agreement places on the shoulders of the United Nations and its organizations and agencies, and its Member States, additional responsibilities in taking part with us in the area of reconstruction, and in implementing, guaranteeing and consolidating the agreement and supervising its various stages.

"The United Nations has an important and effective role to play in the process of maintaining world peace. The implementation of this historic agreement is part and parcel of this process of maintaining peace. We call upon the United Nations to help us in developing that role on the territory of our Palestine national authority, at all levels and in all fields, in such a way as to foster the opportunities for consolidating peace and stability in our region, which is of strategic importance to the whole world.

"We are aware of the major role of the United Nations in helping our people carry out many schemes, plans and

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programmes in education, health, environment and the protection of our heritage and holy places through its organs and specialized agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund. These programmes affect the daily lives of our people, which must be improved so that our people may feel the benefits of the just peace, consolidate its foundations and promote it in the region as a whole.

"We want to rebuild a society whose national institutions and the infrastructure of its national economy the Isreali occupation has succeeded in destroying. Our efforts in rebuilding our homeland will have to match our dreams and the dreams of our people to build their own, independent State with Arab Al-Quds as its capital. We want to build a modern and open society based on justice, social cooperation and a free market economy; a society founded on democracy, political pluralism and participation by all our people's social forces; a society based not on racism and hate but on justice and on equality before the law, on respect for human rights and basic political freedoms; a dynamic society, in which women participate fully side by side with men; a society that provides opportunities for our people that would enable them to take the initiative and work; a society based on good neighbourliness, tolerance and love, in conformity with the history, culture, civilization and traditions of our people in

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

their own land, Palestine, which God has chosen as the land to receive divine messages and saints, the place of the Prophet Muhammad's nocturnal journey, and of the nativity of Jesus Christ.

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

"A just, permanent and comprehensive peace in Palestine and in the Middle East is a great and noble human aim - one which we have always sought. All Member States and this Committee, stand witness to the tremendous efforts we have deployed and continue to deploy to achieve peace, because peace is a Palestinian, Israeli, Arab, regional and international responsibility. This also means solving the problems and addressing the causes leading to the deterioration of the situation and the proliferation of conflicts and wars.

"For over half a century our region has lived through a bitter period of instability, wars, and political, economic and social problems that have sapped its energies and capabilities and deprived it and its peoples - in particular our Palestinian people - of security, development and growth. This continues to pose a grave danger and threat to international peace and security. This Committee, therefore, has a special and great importance in terms of following up on the question of the inalienable rights of our Palestinian people. This is especially true over the interim period, until we arrive at the final phase and at the establishment of the Palestinian State with Holy Al-Quds as its capital, for this will have a direct impact on the future of peace and cooperation in our region and in the world, and because the alternative to peace is turmoil, chaos, balkanization and war.

"Let us all work together to promote a just and comprehensive peace in Palestine, the land of peace, in the region and in the world. We look to this Committee with

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

increasing hope to help our people achieve a just peace, in their interest and in that of the people of the region, so that our children and theirs will have a bright and secure future."

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I ask the representative of Palestine to convey the Committee's sincere thanks to His Excellency Mr. Yasser Arafat for his important message. I would like to assure President Arafat, and, through him, the Palestinian people, of the Committee's unwavering determination to continue and intensify its efforts, within its terms of reference, to contribute to the search for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine that will enable the Palestinian people to exercise, as soon as possible, their inalienable national rights.

I should like, on behalf of the Committee, once again to thank His Excellency the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency the Secretary-General of the United Nations and His Excellency the President of the Security Council for their participation in the first part of our meeting.

(The Chairman)

I now am pleased to call on His Excellency Mr. Stanley Kalpagé, Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

Mr. KALPAGÉ (Sri Lanka), Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories: On behalf of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, and on my own behalf, I have the honour to convey to the Committee this message on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, at a time when historic developments are taking place in the Middle East.

Let me at the outset convey to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the members of your Committee our deep appreciation of your sustained efforts to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine.

I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to express our deep satisfaction at the determination, courage and wisdom which both parties - the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization - have demonstrated in the negotiations leading to the conclusion of the agreement signed in Washington, D.C., on 13 September last. We hope that this agreement will usher in a new era of genuine peace, understanding and prosperity in the region.

As has been its practice in the past, the Special Committee has continued to reflect faithfully a comprehensive picture of the situation with regard to the enjoyment of human rights in the

(Mr. Kalpagé, Chairman, Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories)

occupied territories, in spite of its inability to visit the territories.

The Special Committee is of the opinion that the most encouraging positive developments which started in September must go hand in hand with full compliance with all universally accepted standards of international humanitarian and human-rights law. Since the outset of its activities, the Special Committee has stressed that occupation in itself constitutes a violation of human rights; it considers the recent historic agreement as a first but most significant step in the process of the restitution of all of the occupied territories.

The Special Committee has observed that the denial of the enjoyment of many fundamental rights over a period of more than two decades has led the inhabitants of the occupied territories to feel frustration and despair. It is the hope of the Special Committee that the new era of understanding which started in September of this year will be characterized by a dramatic change of attitude on the part of the Israeli authorities, leading to a truly meaningful improvement in this regard. The Special Committee hopes that its findings will be taken into account when all the concrete measures designed to give life to the spirit of the recent understanding are decided upon.

During the period under review the Special Committee has been preoccupied with several areas in which it feels that changes must be made to maintain the momentum created by the new situation. The

(Mr. Kalpagé, Chairman, Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories)

Special Committee's findings are contained in its twenty-fifth report to the General Assembly.

The administration of justice has been a continued source of concern, as it has been in many respects characterized by an absence of due process of law and legal safeguards for the Arab population of the occupied territories and a severity of sentences which has often been disproportionate to the gravity of the offence. The Special Committee welcomes the encouraging trend of the release of prisoners but remains preoccupied by their treatment, which has given rise to numerous strikes.

A practice which the Special Committee believes should be halted is the demolition of entire blocks of houses and apartments during searches for wanted persons. The Committee also hopes that deportations of persons on the grounds of security will not take place in the future. Another concern is the use of excessive force to quell the uprising of the population of the occupied territories. The new climate of understanding requires a thorough review of the rules for opening fire, and that the use of undercover units be renounced.

In the light of the new situation, the Special Committee believes that the extremely complex issue of settlements will have to be the subject of particularly careful consideration by all concerned and that those who have been affected by land confiscation will have to be given the opportunity to seek and obtain redress.

(Mr. Kalpagé, Chairman, Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories)

Finally, allow me to express the sincere hope of the Special Committee that the spirit of the historic Declaration of Principles which was signed in September will soon be translated into practical reality concerning the full enjoyment of human rights by the entire population of the occupied territories. We hope that the political will and foresight shown by both parties, which was conducive to the September agreement, will lay the foundations for making the Middle East an area of lasting peace and stability, with a promising future, free from tension and conflict, in the larger interests of world peace.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I now have the pleasure of calling on His Excellency Mr. Nugroho Wisnumurti, Permanent Representative of Indonesia, who will read out a message from His Excellency Mr. Soeharto, President of the Republic of Indonesia, in his capacity as Chairman of the Tenth Summit Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Mr. WISNUMURTI (Indonesia): It is a distinct privilege for me to read out the following message from His Excellency Mr. Soeharto, President of the Republic of Indonesia, in his capacity as Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, on the occasion of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People:

(Mr. Wisnumurti, Indonesia)

"On the solemn occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I am privileged, as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, to reaffirm our support of the struggle of the Palestinians to attain their cherished objectives of peace, freedom and justice.

"May I recall that since its inception the question of Palestine has remained at the centre of our concerns and that the non-aligned countries have fully supported all the resolutions adopted by the United Nations in defence of the legitimate Palestinian national rights. We remain steadfast in our belief that a just and comprehensive settlement of this question is essential for peace and security in the Middle East.

(Mr. Wisnumurti, Indonesia)

"This year's observance takes place against the backdrop of the historic signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements by the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Government of Israel, providing for Palestine self-rule and the withdrawal of Israel from the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area of the West Bank, as well as a framework for negotiations to achieve a permanent settlement. The Non-Aligned Movement has welcomed this Declaration as it constitutes a significant milestone on the way to the just and comprehensive resolution of the Palestine question, which has always been the core of the Middle East conflict. It has also given us cause for optimism that peace, mutual trust and reconciliation, which have eluded the Palestinians and Israelis for so long, may become a reality.

"As a nation that has suffered from the bitterness of colonialism, we have a motto that says: 'We love peace, but we love freedom even more.' It is within the spirit of this motto that we welcome the current peace efforts. We are confident that this peace initiative will, in the end, bring the Palestinian people to the realization of their aspirations for national independence and sovereignty in their own land.

"The mutual recognition between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Government of Israel and the subsequent agreement for Palestinian interim self-government have profoundly changed the political landscape in the Middle East and promise to usher in a new era of peace and cooperation. However, the momentum generated by these initial steps should not be allowed to dissipate; rather, it should be nurtured and reinforced by determined efforts in resolving a number of

(Mr. Wisnumurti, Indonesia)

outstanding issues during the difficult transition period, including the right of Palestinians to exercise jurisdiction over occupied territories; by the initiation of remedial measures in redressing the critical socio-economic problems facing them; and by the establishment of viable economic links with neighbouring countries. Intensified international efforts would also be essential in laying the economic foundations and other infrastructures for ensuring a secure future for the Palestinian people. This would offer emerging Palestinian national institutions an unprecedented opportunity to begin the reconstruction of their country and thereby prepare for full independence and statehood.

"In the meantime, Israel should recognize the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention in the occupied territories, restore human rights and rescind its orders that have restricted the political, economic, social and cultural activities of the Palestinians for more than a quarter of a century. It is essential and equally important for Israel to refrain from hindering the peace process and to implement the Declaration in good faith.

"While we are greatly encouraged by the positive developments that have taken place, we are also conscious that the path towards the attainment of a just and durable settlement is made up of uncertain terrain fraught with ambiguities and obstacles. It is therefore essential to intensify the peace process on the basis of mutual benefit and justice and in a spirit of compromise. In this regard, the full implementation of the various provisions of the accord, as well as of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), is of crucial importance.

(Mr. Wisnumurti, Indonesia)

Furthermore, the non-aligned countries call for the permanent responsibility of the United Nations until the question of Palestine is fully resolved in accordance with those resolutions. Such a role for the Organization would also facilitate the settlement of various interrelated aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict, including arms control, regional security, economic development, environment and refugees.

"The task of building peace in the Middle East has just begun, after years of confrontation, suffering and instability. In this noble endeavour, the essential elements of a just and comprehensive settlement must include the withdrawal of Israel from all Arab and Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, the Syrian Golan Heights and southern Lebanon; the recognition and exercise of the legitimate national rights of Palestinians, primarily the right to self-determination; and respect for the rights of States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries.

"The Middle East is now at a crucial turning-point. Hence, the prospects offered by the new opportunities should not be missed. The non-aligned countries hope that substantive progress will be made in the peace talks, leading towards the establishment of a new regional order of justice, dignity and peaceful coexistence.

"On this occasion, I should like to commend the activities of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for the regaining of those rights which have for so long been recognized and demanded by the international community."

(Mr. Wisnumurti, Indonesia)

This message was signed in Jakarta by Soeharto, President of the Republic of Indonesia, on 29 November 1993.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I would request Mr. Wisnumurti to transmit to His Excellency President Soeharto the sincere thanks of the Committee for his important message.

It is now my pleasure to call on Mr. Jamsheed Marker, Permanent Representative of Pakistan, who will read a message from His Excellency Mr. Sardar Asif Ali, Foreign Minister of Pakistan, in his capacity as Chairman of the Twenty-first Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers.

Mr. MARKER (Pakistan): I have the honour to deliver a message from His Excellency Sardar Asif Ali, Foreign Minister of Pakistan, in his capacity as Chairman of the Twenty-first Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, in commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The message reads:

"Solidarity with the Palestinian people and support for their cause were the foremost inspiration behind the creation of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). It is therefore natural that the Organization of the Islamic Conference should have consistently taken a position of principle on the Palestinian issue. Since its creation over 20 years ago, the OIC has extended unqualified support to the Palestinian cause, particularly the liberation of Arab territories, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif. It has repeatedly called for the preservation of the Islamic and Arab character of this holy city, which houses the first Kiblah of Islam.

"Consistent with its charter, the OIC has promoted a just and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian problem based

(Mr. Marker, Pakistan)

on the complete withdrawal of Israel from all Arab and Palestinian territories. It has consistently affirmed that the restoration of the national rights of the Palestinian people is a sine qua non for the establishment of durable peace in the Middle East.

"The OIC Foreign Ministers, in their Annual Coordination Meeting, held in New York on 29 September 1993, had welcomed, as a first step, the positive developments in the Middle East peace process, following the signing of the Declaration of Principles on the modalities for interim self-rule in the occupied Palestinian territories. The Ministers had also reaffirmed the necessity of making progress on the Lebanese and Syrian tracks, with a view to arriving at a just, comprehensive and final settlement on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and the principle of land for peace.

(Mr. Marker, Pakistan)

"The OIC has invariably endorsed the necessity of adhering to all United Nations resolutions calling for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and putting an end to the occupation and to Israeli settlements on Palestinian and Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif. we would like to reaffirm that Al-Quds Al-Sharif, with its national and religious significance, remains a fundamental issue for all Islamic States and that its restoration to Palestinian and Islamic sovereignty is necessary. The OIC will continue its support to the Palestine Liberation Organization to enable it to face the next crucial phase and to strengthen its position in future negotiations so that the Palestinian authority is established across the entire Palestinian territory.

"The Organization of the Islamic Conference, while extending its appreciation to the United Nations and its specialized agencies for their commendable work in the occupied Palestinian territories, invites them to intensify their assistance to the Palestinian people so as to enable them to rebuild their economy and institutions."

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I thank Ambassador Jamsheed Marker and request him to be kind enough to convey to Foreign Minister Ali the sincere thanks of the Committee for his important message.

I now have the pleasure of calling on Mr. Mahmoud Aboul-Nasr, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States, who will read out a message from Mr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel Meguid, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.

Mr. ABOUL-NASR (League of Arab States) (interpretation from Arabic): Mr. Chairman, it gives me great pleasure to read the message that has been addressed by Mr. Esmat Abdel Meguid, Secretary-General of the Arab League, to you on the occasion of the celebration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

"It gives me pleasure to express to you during this celebration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People our appreciation for the efforts of your distinguished Committee to achieve a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine in defence of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, especially its right to self-determination and to the establishment of a State on the entirety of its national soil.

"The peace-loving peoples and Governments of the world recall with a keen sense of pride and gratification the responsiveness of the international community as represented by the United Nations and its various agencies, especially the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in support of the Palestinian people and its rights of return and self-determination. The countries of the world recall the demands that have been made to Israel not to change the demographic and geographical situation in the occupied territories, especially in the holy city of Al-Quds, the reaffirmation that the Palestinian people is principal party to the establishment of peace in the Middle East and the fact that continual efforts have been made to underline the right of the Palestinian people to regain its land.

(Mr. Aboul-Nasr, League of Arab States)

"It is important here to reaffirm Security Council resolution 252 of 21 May 1968, which considers all legislative and administrative measures and actions by Israel in Al-Quds as null and void and could never alter the status of the Holy City. This resolution also deplored the continued inhuman practices of Israel against the Palestinian citizens in the occupied territories, the acts of murder and torture and the arrests and demolition of houses, all of which breach the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 on the protection of civilians under occupation. These acts are in no way consonant with the peace process which has been supported by the international community and accepted by all the Arab State, which are keenly interested in making all necessary efforts to establish just and lasting peace in the Middle East under the terms of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and other relevant resolutions, all of which are based on the principle of land for peace.

"It was in reaffirmation of that stance that the Council of the League of Arab States adopted resolution 5092 on 12 September 1991 - prior to the Madrid peace conference - in support of all the peace efforts, the positions of the negotiating Arab parties to the peace process, and the cause of Palestine in all its aspects. Furthermore, at its 100th session, the Council of the League of Arab States endorsed the Israeli-Palestinian agreement signed on 13 September 1993 as a first important step towards the implementation of the

(Mr. Aboul-Nasr, League of Arab States)

land-for-peace principle, that must be supplemented by a number of other urgent steps on all tracks.

"The League of Arab States, which supports the peace process on the basis of full Israeli withdrawal from the Arab territories occupied by Israel in 1967, reaffirms that the implementation of the Security Council resolutions adopted in this respect could be the most successful incentive to laying down the foundations of peace and development in the Middle East region.

"The League of Arab States, calls upon all members of the international community, and particularly the most influential Powers, to bring pressure to bear upon Israel in order to compel it to comply with the resolutions of the international community.

"The League of Arab States would like to express its confidence that the international community is capable of supporting the peace process and can play its mandated role. The League of Arab States is also confident that the international community - and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People represents an important element of that community - is seeking a world of fraternity and peace where human rights reign - a society from which the hotbeds of conflict and tension should disappear, especially in the Middle East. The international community should make all necessary efforts to ensure the restoration to the Palestinian people of all its legitimate and inalienable

(Mr. Aboul-Nasr, League of Arab States)

rights in order to achieve its right to prosperity and stability like all other peoples of the world.

"I extend to the Committee our thanks for its solidarity with the Palestinian people in order to achieve peace, and wish it continued success in its efforts."

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I thank Ambassador Aboul-Nasr and request him to be kind enough to convey to Mr. Meguid, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, the sincere thanks of the Committee for his important message.

I now have the pleasure of calling on Mr. Larry Ekin, representative of the International Coordinating Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) on the Question of Palestine.

Mr. EKIN (International Coordinating Committee of NGOs on the Question of Palestine): May I express greetings on behalf of Mr. Don Betz, Chairman of the International Coordinating Committee of NGOs on the Question of Palestine. Mr. Betz was, regrettably, unable to attend today and so the opportunity came to me to make a few remarks on this occasion.

Our gathering today takes place at a time of profound changes in the international political landscape. This is self-evident, and I will leave it to others to explore more fully and elaborate upon this new political context. I would prefer to use this opportunity to discus how we as NGOs are responding to this new situation and what measures are required from the NGO community to help build momentum that will accumulate and result in the fruition of the Palestinian people's aspirations.

(Mr. Ekin, International Coordinating Committee of NGOs on the Question of Palestine)

Historically, non-governmental organizations expressed their solidarity with the Palestinian people through three main forms of involvement. These can be characterized as direct aid and assistance, information activities and advocacy work.

During times of crisis going back to at least 1948 non-governmental organizations often provided direct aid in the form of relief supplies. At other times these forms of assistance to the Palestinian people evolved to reflect more of an emphasis on community-based development and the support of legitimate national aspirations. As the programmes of non-governmental organizations became more sophisticated, they also understood the importance of the active participation of the Palestinian people in the decision-making processes surrounding these endeavours.

Non-governmental organizations have consistently tried to inform their constituents about the conditions faced by the Palestinian people. In North America this emphasis on education consistently sought to humanize the Palestinian people for an ill-informed public.

As non-governmental organizations have deepened their relationships with the Palestinian people they also came to understand that they must practice advocacy - that is, it is not enough to possess information but, rather, information must be used to mobilize their constituents, to inform Governments and to hold them accountable.

In addition, I would note that in the past decade non-governmental organizations built a productive working relationship with the United Nations through the Committee.

(Mr. Ekin, International Coordinating Committee of NGOs on the Question of Palestine)

Working together with the Palestinian people, we have succeeded in enhancing the work of all of us. Indeed, the resolutions of the United Nations provided the political outlines for the framework that many non-governmental organizations have embraced as fundamental to achieving a just solution to this question.

Under the new political conditions and in the new political context we expect non-governmental organizations to continue to practice all three forms of their solidarity work. We also anticipate pursuing our partnership with the United Nations by re-evaluating and refining our participation in light of the new conditions in order to express our continuing solidarity.

Virtually everyone anticipates a massive infusion of material aid and development assistance as a result of the signing of the Declaration of Principles. At the governmental level we have seen the commitments made through the World Bank and among many donor nations for aid aimed at sustaining the Declaration of Principles. At the level of non-governmental organizations our constituents are already working to do what we can to ensure that a maximum of non-governmental-organization aid is delivered with a minimum of waste. Non-governmental-organization constituents are drafting statements of principles and guidelines for involvement. We are attempting to reach and educate newly interested non-governmental organizations that are anticipating entering for the first time under the new conditions.

However, we also anticipate increasing our information and advocacy work. We want to ensure that while attention is focused on Jericho and the Gaza Strip the plight of the remainder of the Palestinian people is neither neglected nor ignored. What is more,

(Mr. Ekin, International Coordinating Committee of NGOs on the Question of Palestine)

experience in other situations around the world teaches us that during this approaching period of sensitive negotiations non-governmental organizations can continue to play a vital role in assisting the Palestinian people.

Finally, and most importantly, let us recall why we are gathered here today. During their years of exile and occupation the Palestinian people made many friends around the world. Their achievements and their courage inspired millions of people. We would also take note of the contributions made by many Israelis who defied the dictates of their Government and acted in conscience to pursue visions of a future that accommodated both peoples.

Today we are hopeful that we have witnessed a new beginning, but we are under no illusions. What has been achieved retains a fragility that may be all-too easily shattered. But we can promise this: Whether the new developments prove transient and illusory or whether they prove to be important building-blocks in the establishment of a peaceful Middle East, our solidarity and sense of commitment will remain. The Palestinian people deserve no less.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to present these thoughts. I look forward to discussing these developments with you and with other members of the Committee in greater detail. I also look forward to sharing more information with the Committee on the ongoing role of non-governmental-organization activities on the question of Palestine.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from French): I would ask Mr. Ekin kindly to convey our thanks to the International Coordinating Committee for the valuable contribution that

(The Chairman)

non-governmental organizations have always made to the work of the Committee.

It is my honour now to announce that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has received messages of support and solidarity from many Heads of State or Government, from Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Governments and organizations, and I shall now read out a list of those messages. The texts of the messages will, as is customary, be published in a special bulletin of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

We have received messages from the following Heads of State: His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates; His Excellency Mr. Runaldo Ronald Venetiaan, President of the Republic of Suriname; His Excellency Mr. Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada, President of the Republic of Bolivia; His Excellency Mr. Abdou Diouf, President of the Republic of Senegal; His Excellency Mr. Nouhak Phoumsavanh, President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic; His Excellency Mr. Boris Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation; His Majesty King Hussein Bin Talal of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Hosni Mubarak, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt; His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar; His Excellency Mr. Burhanuddin Rabbani, President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan; His Excellency Mr. Le Duc Anh, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam; His Highness Shaikh Isa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa, Emir of the State of Bahrain; His Excellency Mr. Ali-Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran; His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei Darussalam; His Excellency Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of the Republic of Maldives;

(The Chairman)

His Excellency Mr. Ali Hassan Mwinyi, President of the United Republic of Tanzania; His Excellency Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia; and His Excellency Mr. Robert Gabriel Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

We have also received messages from the following Heads of Government: Her Excellency Mrs. Tansu Çiller, Prime Minister of Turkey; His Excellency Mr. Li Peng, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China; His Excellency Mr. Edward Fenech Adami, Prime Minister of Malta; Her Excellency Mrs. Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, Prime Minister of Pakistan; and His Excellency Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao, Prime Minister of India.

(The Chairman)

The Committee has also received messages from the Government of Argentina and from the Government of Guyana.

The following Foreign Ministers have sent messages: His Excellency Mr. Fares Boueiz, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Lebanese Republic; His Excellency Mr. Mohamed-Salah Dembri, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria; His Excellency Mr. Anatoly Zlenko, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine; His Excellency Mr. Tsutomu Hata, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan; His Excellency Mr. Ibrahima Sylla, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Guinea; His Excellency Ambassador Celso Luiz Nunez Amorim, Minister for External Relations of Brazil; His Excellency Mr. Yousef Bin Al-Alawi Bin Abdalla, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman; His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Salem Ould Lekhal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania; and His Excellency Mr. Farouq Al-Sharaa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic.

From intergovernmental organizations, a message has been received from His Excellency Mr. Hamid Algabid, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

From specialized agencies, the Committee has received a message from His Excellency Mr. Federico Mayor, Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

The following non-governmental organizations have sent us messages: the International Committee for Arab-Israeli Reconciliation; the International Union of Students; the African

(The Chairman)

Society of the Organization of African Unity; the Arab Association for Human Rights; the International Progress Organization; the Italian-Palestinian Medical Association; the Latin American Association for Human Rights; the Association of Antifascists and Victims of Nazism in Israel; the Union of Palestinian American Women; and the Arab Women's Union, Bethlehem.

From national liberation movements, the Committee has received a message from the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania.

Those are the messages received so far. Messages that are received later will be published in the bulletin of the Division.

I should like, on behalf of the entire Committee, to express sincere gratitude to the Heads of State and Government, Foreign Ministers, Governments, the organizations I have just listed and to all participants for their constant efforts towards securing a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine and for their steadfast support for the objectives and activities of the Committee.

The statements that we have heard and the messages of solidarity that we have received today demonstrate once again the determination of the international community to progress towards the establishment of peace in the Middle East through the achievement of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, based on United Nations resolutions. I can assure all those present that we, the members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, will spare no effort to achieve these objectives.

Before adjourning this solemn meeting, I wish to thank all those who helped organize this Day - in particular, the members of the Division for Palestinian Rights, the Office of Conference

(The Chairman)

Services and the Office of Public Information, as well as those who work behind the scenes to see to our security.

I remind all participants that the exhibit arranged by the Office of the Permanent Observer of Palestine, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, will be opened at 6 p.m. in the lobby of the General Assembly Building, and that the ceremony will be followed by a reception.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.